

Welcome Michal Handzel !

Post by "Cassius" of November 19, 2022 at 7:39 PM

Welcome [Michal Handzel](#)

Note: In order to minimize spam registrations, all new registrants must respond in this thread to this welcome message within 72 hours of its posting, or their account is subject to deletion. All that is required is a "Hello!" but of course we hope you will introduce yourself and let us know if you have had previous studies or background in philosophy, what prompted your interest in Epicureanism, and if you have any questions. And feel free to join in on one or more of our conversation threads under various topics found throughout the forum.

This forum is the place for students of Epicurus to coordinate their studies and work together to promote the philosophy of Epicurus. Please remember that all posting here is subject to our [Community Standards / Rules of the Forum](#) our [Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean](#) and our [Posting Policy statements](#) and [associated posts](#).

Please understand that the leaders of this forum are well aware that many fans of Epicurus may have sincerely-held views of what Epicurus taught that are incompatible with the purposes and standards of this forum. This forum is dedicated exclusively to the study and support of people who are committed to classical Epicurean views. As a result, this forum is not for people who seek to mix and match some Epicurean views with positions that are inherently inconsistent with the core teachings of Epicurus.

All of us who are here have arrived at our respect for Epicurus after long journeys through other philosophies, and we do not demand of others what we were not able to do ourselves. Epicurean philosophy is very different from other viewpoints, and it takes time to understand how deep those differences really are. That's why we have membership levels here at the forum which allow for new participants to discuss and develop their own learning, but it's also why we have standards that will lead in some cases to arguments being limited, and even participants being removed, when the purposes of the community require it. Epicurean philosophy is not inherently democratic, or committed to unlimited free speech, or devoted to any other form of organization other than the pursuit by our community of happy living through the principles of Epicurean philosophy.

One way you can be most assured of your time here being productive is to tell us a little about yourself and personal your background in reading Epicurean texts. It would also be helpful if you could tell us how you found this forum, and any particular areas of interest that you have which would help us make sure that your questions and thoughts are addressed.

In that regard we have found over the years that there are a number of key texts and references which most all serious students of Epicurus will want to read and evaluate for themselves. Those include the following.

1. ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) by Norman DeWitt
2. [The Biography of Epicurus by Diogenes Laertius.](#) This includes the surviving letters of Epicurus, including those to [Herodotus](#), [Pythocles](#), and [Menoceus](#).
3. ["On The Nature of Things"](#) - by Lucretius (a poetic abridgement of Epicurus' "On Nature")
4. ["Epicurus on Pleasure"](#) - By Boris [Nikolsky](#)
5. The chapters on Epicurus in [Gosling and Taylor's "The Greeks On Pleasure."](#)
6. [Cicero's "On Ends" - Torquatus Section](#)
7. [Cicero's "On The Nature of the Gods" - Velleius Section](#)
8. The Inscription of Diogenes of Oinoanda - [Martin Ferguson Smith translation](#)
9. [A Few Days In Athens" - Frances Wright](#)
10. Lucian Core Texts on Epicurus: (1) [Alexander the Oracle-Monger](#), (2) [Hermodotimus](#)
11. [Philodemus "On Methods of Inference"](#) (De Lacy version, including his appendix on relationship of Epicurean canon to Aristotle and other Greeks)
12. "The Greeks on Pleasure" -Gosling & Taylor Sections on Epicurus, especially the [section on katastematic and kinetic pleasure](#) which explains why ultimately this distinction was not of great significance to Epicurus.

It is by no means essential or required that you have read these texts before participating in the forum, but your understanding of Epicurus will be much enhanced the more of these you have read.

And time has also indicated to us that if you can find the time to read one book which will best explain [classical Epicurean philosophy](#), as opposed to most modern "eclectic" interpretations of Epicurus, that book is Norman DeWitt's ***Epicurus And His Philosophy.***

Welcome to the forum!

Not Neo-Epicurean, But Epicurean

1. Not "flourishing," "human potential," "self-actualization," or "meaningfulness," but happiness grounded in the feeling of pleasure.
2. Not "absence of pain" as a full statement of the goal of life, but "the Feelings are two, pleasure and pain" and "Pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life."
3. Not virtue for the sake of virtue, but virtue as instrumental for the attainment of pleasure.
4. Not "the greatest good for the greatest number," but "Every desire must be confronted with this question: What will happen to me if the object of my desire is accomplished and what if it is not?"
5. Not "humanism," "transhumanism," "individualism," "collectivism," "egoism," "altruism," "social progress," "Marxism," "democracy," "tyranny," or any "one size fits all" political ideal of any kind, but social structure based on friendship which "is formed and maintained by means of a community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure."
6. Not "hard determinism," but "some things happen from necessity, some from chance, and others through our own choice."
7. Not "supernaturalism," but "materialism."
8. Not "supernatural gods," or "life after death," but confidence in a fully material universe and "for those men for whom wisdom is possible, and who do seek it, such men may truly live as gods."
9. Not only "short term hedonism," but "it is to continuous pleasures that I invite you."
10. Not "rationalism," but "all reason is dependent upon sensations."
11. Not fearful of death nor careless of losing life, but valuing life for the opportunity of pleasure it brings.

Our Posting Policy At EpicureanFriends.com:

"No Partisan Politics," "No Supernatural Religion," and "No Absolute Virtue"

This forum is dedicated to promoting the philosophy of Epicurus, and not to any partisan political positions whether "left," "right," or "center." The task of rediscovering Epicurean philosophy requires that such discussions be held elsewhere. Posts violating this rule are subject to removal.



Epicurean philosophy firmly rejects the viewpoint that there are any supernatural forces or absolute virtues or Platonic ideals of any kind. Argument which is based on supernatural claims, or "absolute" virtues or ideals of any kind, are in violation of this rule and subject to removal.

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Post by “Charles” of November 21, 2022 at 10:20 AM

Welcome [Michal Handzel](#) !

Post by “Michal Handzel” of November 22, 2022 at 12:49 PM

Hello, everybody

I am a historian of philosophy by training.

I started to be interested in Epicurus' texts recently.

I would like to explore his thought with you.

Warm greetings from Poland.

Michał Handzel

Post by “Eikadistes” of November 22, 2022 at 1:00 PM

Hello, [Michal Handzel](#)! Your education as a historian of philosophy is very welcome here.

Post by “Cassius” of November 22, 2022 at 1:28 PM

[Quote from Nate](#)

Your education as a historian of philosophy is very welcome here

Yes it certainly is! Most of us here (excluding the lurkers about whom I know little) are most or entirely self-taught, and especially when trying to compare Epicurus to earlier philosophers to see what Epicurus might be replying to, the lack of extensive reading takes a considerable toll.

Post by "Cassius" of November 22, 2022 at 2:37 PM

This line of discussion - and the importance of knowing the details of the history of Greek philosophy in particular and philosophy in general- reminds me of my personal position on how much history is needed.

As much as I want to know as many details as I can, there is no way I will ever be able to learn to read any Greek with any confidence, and I'm not much better at Latin. I'll never be able to backtrack and become an expert in the history of world philosophies, or to be able to even process, much less pass judgment on, the many complicated philosophical arguments. So if all I have to rely on is philosophy books I will never have any confidence in anything. But I can read enough from many different sources to see the outline of the argument that Epicurus was making, and it rings just as true to me today regardless of the passing of years, and without recourse to any arguments from "authority."

I can use my own observations to validate that in every way that is significant to me, "[nothing can be created from nothing](#) at the will of the gods" and that is personally sufficient to me as a starting point to take confidence in the rest of the core elements of the philosophy. I do not have the luxury of sitting back and contemplating possibilities for years on end - my life is short and I have to live it without all the information I would like to have, using the best judgment that I can come up with based on evidence. I see no reason to think the universe as a whole had a beginning, or that it has any supernatural ruler over it, or that there is an absolute set of "ideal forms" or "essences" or "right and wrong" commandments that I have to follow. That leaves me with what Epicurus pointed out - the faculty of pleasure and pain - as the only ultimate basis for what to do in life. That's where I have ended up after my years of study of Epicurus, and I don't see any reason to expect that any of those conclusions are likely to change.

It's not quite the same as Thomas Jefferson's statement, but close, especially to the underlined part, and I am content with this reasoning be it 1820 or 300 BC:

Jefferson to John Adams, August 15, 1820: ([Full version at Founders.gov](#))

.... But enough of criticism: let me turn to your puzzling letter of May 12. on matter, spirit, motion etc. It's crowd of scepticisms kept me from sleep. I read it, and laid it down: read it, and laid it down, again and again: and to give rest to my mind, **I was obliged to recur ultimately to my habitual anodyne, 'I feel: therefore I exist.' I feel bodies which are not myself: there are other existencies then. I call them *matter*. I feel them changing place. This gives me motion. Where there is an absence of matter, I call it *void*, or *nothing*, or *immaterial space*. On the basis of sensation, of matter and motion, we may erect the fabric of all the certainties we can have or need.** I can conceive *thought* to be an action of

a particular organisation of matter, formed for that purpose by it's creator, as well as that *attraction* is an action of matter, or *magnetism* of loadstone. When he who denies to the Creator the power of endowing matter with the mode of action called *thinking* shall shew how he could endow the Sun with the mode of action called *attraction*, which reins the planets in the tract of their orbits, or how an absence of matter can have a will, and, by that will, put matter into motion, then the materialist may be lawfully required to explain the process by which matter exercises the faculty of thinking. When once we quit the basis of sensation, all is in the wind. **To talk of immaterial existences is to talk of nothings. To say that the human soul, angels, god, are immaterial, is to say they are nothings, or that there is no god, no angels, no soul. I cannot reason otherwise:** but I believe I am supported in my creed of materialism by Locke, Tracy, and Stewart.

So like Lucian's Alexander the Oracle Monger story I will happily entertain any claim to supernatural phenomena that anyone wants to show me really exists through evidence I can validate. And if and when I am able to validate that evidence I will certainly take it into account and change my worldview accordingly. But there is no reason whatsoever to entertain the possibility that any such evidence will ever be produced, and in turn there is massive reason to believe that any assertions of such evidence are purely fraudulent - just as with Alexander.

And just as I will be happy to entertain any verifiable evidence, I am always happy to learn more about the arguments and the background that led Epicurus to the places where he ended up, and I am happy and appreciative to draw on the information that others in other careers have been able to learn.

Post by "Martin" of November 22, 2022 at 3:27 PM

Welcome Michal Handzel!